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CAPITALISM DEFENDS ITSELF

**THROUGH
THE**

**SOCIALIST
LABOR
PARTY**

**By
M. J.
OLGIN**

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This goes to show that we Communists have neglected these creatures a bit too long. We thought them harmless—and in the main we were right. However, at this stage of the collapse of capitalism, when the masses are growing more and more embittered with the crisis, when the struggle of the hungry, employed and unemployed, is becoming more desperate and therefore more menacing to the existing system, when the masses are rapidly learning to understand that the Communist Party is their leader in the struggles for immediate demands and for liberation from the capitalist yoke, capitalism is mobilizing all its forces to disrupt and demoralize the movement. In this noble work the Socialist-Labor-Partyites can also do

"How funny this little S. L. P. appears—small vote, no noise, scarcely any publicity, just talking revolution year in and year out." This is how the Socialist Labor Party characterizes itself in its official organ, the *Weekly People*. We agree with the S. L. P. writer about the size of the "party," but we do not agree that it is "funny." A bed-bug is not funny. It may be small, it makes no noise, "scarcely any publicity," it is not dangerous, but it has an odor. Its bite is only a bug-bite, but—it is not funny.

By MOISSAYE J. OLGIN

Comrade William Z. Foster
An Expose of What Stands Behind the S. L. P. Attack on

Capitalism Defends Itself Through The Socialist Labor Party

their bit. It isn't much, but every sting counts. As a matter of fact, the Socialist Labor Party has of late begun to *specialize* in attacks on the Communist movement. It is well worth paying some attention to that "party."

WHO ARE THEY AND WHAT DO THEY WANT?

They say about themselves that they are "talking revolution"; they spread all over their paper the slogan, "Capitalism must be destroyed." They repeat in every statement that they are "championing the cause of social revolution." They emphatically declare against "reformism." A worker unfamiliar with verbal trickery could be impressed. Why, here are true revolutionists who think of nothing but the social revolution. Here are real champions of the workers' cause. Closer observation, however, reveals that it is a strange social revolution and a strange destruction of capitalism. "For the worker today there is no hope except through social revolution, the overthrow of the capitalist system of private ownership, of the means of wealth production," says the resolution of the Socialist Labor Party adopted at its national convention on May 1, 1932. But in the very same passage it adds: "The Socialist Labor Party advocates this change on the political field, establishing through the ballot our revolutionary right to abolish the present corrupt political state." It appears, then, that the revolution of the S. L. P.-ites is not a revolution at all. The "revolutionists" from the "funny little party" wish to establish *the right* to a revolution *through the ballot*. They wish to secure a majority of votes in America for their right to abolish capitalism.

Maybe they are, nevertheless, preparing the workers for the revolution in a revolutionary way? Maybe the ballot is only an incident in their revolutionary preparations? The gentlemen state clearly: "The political or-

ganization gathers *peacefully* the requisite support of the majority necessary for social reconstruction." * The S. L. P.-ites just "gather support." They confine themselves to trying to convince a majority of the population of America—not a majority of the working class, but a majority of the entire voting population—that it is necessary to change from capitalism to Socialism.

Again and again the "revolutionists" stress that "the revolution toward which the S. L. P. has set its face is a *peaceful* one"; and not only that; it is a revolution which is in full accord with "American institutions." "It is the one for which our revolutionary fathers, forecasting its inevitable necessity, so wisely provided in that great document known as the Constitution of the United States." The "social revolution" of the S. L. P. was "wisely" foreseen by "our fathers," the merchants and landlords of 150 years ago! We only have to reap the fruit of their wisdom! These "true revolutionists" build their hope on an instrument designed to preserve and perpetuate the capitalist system.

The S. L. P. is very persuasive in selling this brand of "constitutional revolution." "Don't be frightened like a cowardly capitalist," writes the *Weekly People*, "at the word revolution. It is not a dreadful word whatsoever. Its true meaning is 'change,' a complete fundamental change. The idea of inevitable bloodshed, commonly associated with revolution, is a mere association of ideas." The revolution can come "with the very minimum of disturbance"—a nice, lovely revolution; today we have capitalism, tomorrow you wake up and find yourselves in a Socialist system—all with a "minimum of disturbance." Is this possible? The wise men of the S. L. P. explain: "It is true, no revolution can ever be

* All the following quotations are taken either from the platform and resolutions of the S. L. P. convention or from recent issues of the *Weekly People*.

accomplished without *force*”—but if you are again disturbed at the prospect of some fighting, just wait a minute and your fears will be dispelled. Force is necessary, indeed. But—“again the question arises: What is force? Force is power. But power is not necessarily physical power.” Thus we happily achieve a wonderful perspective of the “revolution.” Its foundation is the Constitution. Its weapon is the ballot. Its force is the public opinion. If you are a capitalist, you must welcome such a “revolution.” You must say to yourself that this idle chatter about a ballot revolution is good to put workers to sleep.

Lest a worker protest that there is a way of real revolution, a way of mass struggles, of uprisings, of seizure of power by force—and not the “force” of public opinion but the force of *arms*, the S. L. P. propagandist hastens to explain that “the day of the revolutionary barricade is passed.” Today, he says, “machines do battle and the machines are in the hands of the ruling class.” In other words, a revolution is an utter impossibility. A worker may ask: Isn’t it possible for the revolutionists to secure at least part of the “machines” that “do battle”? Haven’t the revolutionists in every country had to seize arms to carry through their revolution? “Explosives and poison gas hurled from a few airplanes can route a whole revolutionary army in no time,” says the S.L.P. But when it comes to real fighting, why shouldn’t the revolutionists also be able to secure at least part of the explosives and poison gases? Weren’t they able to secure cannon and machine guns and airplanes in the Russian Revolution? Aren’t there more workers than capitalists knowing how to use the mechanisms of war?

The only answer an S. L. P. man can give is that such means of struggle are not provided in the Constitution of the United States. But then, to the S. L. P. man, the political struggle is not the important thing, after all. To him the political movement is only necessary, so to

speak, to secure *consent* to something vastly more important—the *Industrial Union*. It is about this Industrial Union that the S. L. P. man waxes particularly eloquent. He considers the Industrial Union his greatest contribution to the theory of the social revolution.

The Industrial Union, he says, is an organization of the workers in every industry. It is not a craft union which unites the workers of one trade, but it is an all-embracing body uniting both skilled and unskilled workers of the same industry. So far so good. Industrial unions are a vital necessity for the workers. But do not be misled to think that the S. L. P. advocates industrial unions to fight the battles of the workers, to strike for higher wages or shorter labor-hours or better conditions. Do not think that the S. L. P.-ites actually *build* or help build industrial unions. Nothing of the kind. An industrial union built under American conditions against the opposition of the American Federation of Labor allied with the police and bosses must be inevitably small at the beginning. It must grow in the stress of struggle. The S. L. P. cautions against such union building. "The structure of *Socialist industrial unionism*," they say in the resolution of their last convention, "does not lend itself to the starting of sporadic small and scattered unions. Not only would these be easily defeated and scattered by capitalist attack but they would, in the nature of things, be no *industrial unions* at all." In other words, the industrial unions must be something which has no beginning; they must spring from somewhere ready-made, embracing all the workers of a certain industry; they must not be at any time "sporadic, small and scattered." How is it possible to have industrial unions full grown without first being small? How is it possible to organize a mass organization without its being at the beginning sporadic? This is one of the mysteries which the S. L. P. men do not hasten to explain. But then, they do not need the explanation. Their unions are not at all

unions for struggle. "Isolated organizations that form now or are bound to spring up, should aim at nothing more drastic than to hold together and maintain organization until large groups of workers get ready to move," they say. A union should be formed that would do nothing but "hold together" indefinitely. Why should it hold together? What interest would the workers have to hold together? What power would move the broader masses to join such a union? Oh, the S. L. P. men have prepared a grand task for their grand industrial unions! The industrial union must prepare for a time when it will take over the industry from the capitalists and manage it in the interests of all. Very nice! But how in the meantime? They must not be idle in the meantime either. "Before this [the introduction of Socialism] can be done the workers must acquire certain information about this huge undertaking. They must learn all about what they are to do, how they are to do it, and with what they are to do it." They certainly have a lot to learn. They have to learn all about how they are going to manage their industry after the social revolution. Where will they get the information? This too has been provided by the astute S. L. P. revolutionists. "This source of information is already at hand in the S. L. P."

The plan is complete. You organize labor unions, industrial unions, not for struggle but to be pickled and preserved until after the social revolution. This social revolution is to be secured through the ballot. The industrial unions are to be turned into study classes to learn "all about" what their activities should be after the social revolution. When a majority of the people of the United States have voted in favor of Socialism then the Industrial Union steps in and makes Socialism. Until then it won't engage in any sporadic struggles. It will just sit tight and wait for the ballot to pave it the way.

A strange revolution, isn't it? But at least it has one good feature: It disturbs nobody. It leaves the capitalists

alone. The S. L. P. is against "the existing barbarous class conflict." Its solution is a political organization which will secure a majority and an industrial organization which will be ready to act upon the decision of that majority.

An excellent solution—excellent for capitalism. No better program could be devised to protect the interests of the exploiters. We do not care a damn whether these S. L. P. fellows are sincere or venal. We are not interested in them personally. We must judge them objectively, by the actual meaning of their propaganda. Fortunately for the working class, they are few and their influence is almost nil. But this does not make their theory less pernicious. It is a theory of doing nothing to capitalism. It is a theory of leaving the field clear for capitalist exploitation. It is a theory designed to drug the working class into apathy. We are revolutionists, say the S. L. P. men. They do not spare words. "Workers, rise in your might." "Workers, organize in shop, mill, mine, factory." "Overthrow capitalism." "Organize the Socialist Industrial Republic of Labor." The worker is supposed to get drunk on these phrases—drunk and sleepy. He must not organize for immediate struggle. He must not fight capitalism with revolutionary means. He must not use mass action. "The capitalist system cannot be abolished by mobs," says the S. L. P. The workers must not congregate in the streets, because "mobs, being unorganized and having neither discipline nor training, are easily dispersed and overcome." Under the mask of friendship to the workers the S. L. P. propagandists are smuggling in the most hateful contempt for the masses. They even dare to quote Marx and Engels to prove that the workers must refrain from mass action. Over and over again they emphasize: "This is not a time for silly masquerading by parades and fruitless demonstrations. This is the hour for serious and well-planned action." If this phrase means anything it means that

the workers should sit quietly and "plan" the management of the industries in the future, leaving the field in the meantime to the capitalist brutalities, to hunger and starvation. "The talk of 'physical force against physical force' is ridiculous," says the S. L. P. "The workers are not even permitted to carry a gun, much less to train or drill." They are not permitted, presumably, because it is not provided by the Constitution of the United States. If the workers are not permitted to parade they must not parade. If they are not permitted to carry arms that ends it. "To the perpetual question, 'what will you do for the workers now?'" says the *Weekly People* of September 17, "the S. L. P. answers boldly *Nothing*, since nothing can be done except what capitalism is doing."

That's just it. Since capitalism can do no more, the workers must demand no more. Wages are cut — the workers must vote the S. L. P. ticket. Unemployed are left without relief—the workers must talk "social revolution," which means doing nothing for the present. The unemployed are evicted for non-payment of rent—nobody must do anything "since nothing can be done except what capitalism is doing." A comfortable theory, comfortable tactics—comfortable for the S. L. P. fossils because it doesn't require any real revolutionary action while it leaves the halo of revolutionary phrases, *and comfortable for capitalism* because it leaves the workers helpless and hopeless.

It is a reactionary theory which, if acquiring recognition among great numbers of workers, would be more detrimental even than the reformism of capitalist politicians. It is a theory that could deaden the working class, lulling it into oblivion, making it comply with the greatest oppression—in the name of the social revolution.

It is needless to say that the "social revolution" itself, as declaimed by the S. L. P., is a phantom. Workers

cannot be *trained* for the social revolution if they are not *participating in the daily struggles*. Workers cannot be organized if they are not *fighting for every-day demands*. The working class cannot become strong if it does not gather and steel its forces in continuous class battles. The working class cannot ripen for the revolution if it does not develop class-conscious leadership, hardened in fights, enriched with revolutionary experience. The working class cannot *plan* Socialist management of industries until it has seized power and destroyed the state machine of capitalism. The working class cannot seize power otherwise than in an armed uprising against the armed forces of capitalism. "Marxists have never forgotten that force and violence will inevitably accompany the crash of capitalism from top to bottom and will be the midwife at the birth of Socialist society," said Lenin. Force and violence are not the invention of the working class; they are *forced* upon the working class by its exploiters. "You, Messrs. capitalists, be the first to shoot"—this is how Engels formulated the problem of a revolution. The workers always resort to force and violence only in reply to the force and violence of the capitalist class. The very revolution is only a forceful resistance to intolerable conditions forced upon the workers by their exploiters.

The workers cannot free themselves by the ballot though they recognize the importance of the ballot as an expression of mass protest. That Constitution of the United States, so beloved by the S. L. P., is nothing but a play-ball in the hands of the ruling class. When it is in their interests they use the sham of democracy. When their profits are menaced, they set their constitution aside, using brute force. If a time were to come when the menace of a majority vote against capitalism were looming—an eventuality inconceivable in a society where all the avenues of information and propaganda are controlled by the capitalists and where the majority is

formed by the petty-bourgeois classes which are in the main under the influence of capitalism—a battalion or so of soldiers would be sufficient to disperse the voters and to change the voting system. Would the workers resist? The S. L. P. teaches them not to use force, to abhor “barbaric methods.” The S. L. P., by trying to pin the faith of the workers on the Constitution of the United States and the possibility and probability of receiving a mandate for Socialism by the ballot, is betraying the workers to the capitalists.

For a revolution it is not necessary to have the consent of the majority of the entire population, which consent is entirely utopian.

“For a revolution,” says Lenin, “it is necessary, first, to create a situation where a majority of the workers (or at least a majority of the class-conscious, thinking, politically active workers) perfectly understand the necessity of an overthrow and are ready to die for it; secondly, where the ruling class is passing through a crisis of government which is drawing into politics even the most backward masses (it is a sign of every real revolution—this rapid tenfold or even hundredfold increase in the number of representatives of the laboring and oppressed, hitherto apathetic mass, capable of political struggle), is weakening the government and is making it possible for the revolutionists to overthrow it quickly.”

But the majority of the workers will not become conscious of the necessity of a social revolution unless they have gone through previous revolutionary struggles for the interests of the working class.

REACTIONARY IN PRACTICE

“Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement,” says Lenin. Paraphrasing this thesis we may say that where there is a reactionary theory the movement must also be reactionary. The theory of the S. L. P. is reactionary. Their movement can hardly be discerned, but their attitude towards the

current problems and current struggles is in full accord with the reactionary essence of their propaganda.

The S. L. P.-ites are against reforms. This sounds "revolutionary." Capitalism, they say, cannot be mended. Therefore, they are against the struggle for unemployment relief and unemployment insurance. "Shame on you, beggars," they say to the workers who demand relief. They speak of "trembling lips and fearful quaking hands asking for a mite with which to keep alive." They say they are against "begging." But they are also against demanding. They are against revolutionary methods of struggle for unemployment relief. "It does not matter," they say, "if, instead of trembling, you march with signs that beg for you, or shout your pleas for charity where others murmur. That does not constitute revolution. That does not make men of you. You are still begging. And for what? For something that you cannot obtain from dying, rotting capitalism."

Here you have it — the philosophy of counter-revolution. The workers can obtain nothing from capitalism. Protests are useless. Demands are only degrading. What then shall the workers do? Shall they permit the capitalists to unload on their shoulders all the burden of the crisis? Shall they not force the capitalists to yield—*even if it hurts the entire capitalist system*? Shall they not force their demands with ever greater vigor just *because it hurts the entire capitalist system*? The S. L. P. says no. The S. L. P. has another remedy. "Help Thyself is the great dictum to manhood. "The workers must look to themselves. Not charity but justice must be the slogan."

It sounds proud. But what is that justice? The S. L. P.-ites have the ready answer: "That justice is nothing short of the abolition of capitalism and wage-slavery." You want bread? Abolish capitalism right away. You do not want to be evicted? Abolish capitalism. You say the abolition of capitalism is not yet at hand? Then sit

and wait. Do nothing. Do nothing for the unemployed and do nothing for the employed. The S. L. P. "asks not for crumbs of mercy, it demands the means of production for the producers," and since these means of production cannot be secured immediately, the slogan "Help Thyself" means in practice *to submit to hunger and starvation without a murmur.*

More than that. The S. L. P. is very specific in pointing out that capitalism *cannot* improve the conditions of the workers at present. No better plea for the capitalists has ever been made, even by Hoover himself. The S. L. P. says:

"Charity lists grow longer, and funds shorter. One municipality after another finds itself unable to meet its payroll (poor municipalities! How can they really increase the taxes of the rich?—M.J.O.). Virtual bankruptcy. The states throw up their hands (poor states! There are no more rich left in this land, says Charles M. Schwab—M.J.O.). They can do no more for the unemployed. All that remains is the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, with its fast dwindling funds—funds which, even when appropriated, were admitted, by the sponsor of the bill, to be sufficient to meet the needs of only 300,000 of the twelve to fifteen million unemployed. And for how long? Our federal government's deficit of three billion dollars is on the increase."

The poor capitalists can do nothing; the workers must starve and die without resistance, says the S. L. P. The government has exhausted all its resources. If the workers feel uncomfortable let them console themselves with the social revolution. If a revolt is stirring within them, if they say to themselves that they don't care whether the municipalities have funds or not because *the capitalists have*, if they are getting ready to demand and fight and take what belongs to them even if this shakes the entire capitalist system, the S. L. P. is right at hand, saying, "There must be no bloodshed, there must be no riots, there must be no mob violence, there must be respect for the Constitution of the United States."

Where there is a reactionary theory there certainly is a reactionary movement.

It will not surprise us then if we find that the S. L. P.-ites are terribly indignant over the march of the unemployed to New York City Hall on August 10, under Communist leadership. They perfectly agree with Mayor McKee that nothing can be done. "The City Hall," they say, "is neither a bakeshop, a lodging house nor a pawnbroker's establishment." The workers, they say, can get nothing by such demonstrations. The S. L. P.-ites are so enraged against the Communists for marching to the City Hall that they reprint in full the editorial of the arch-capitalist *Herald Tribune* which praises Mayor McKee for "giving reasonable answers to unreasonable demands" and which brands the Communists as "professional troublemakers." With the latter statement the S. L. P. particularly agrees. Marching to the City Hall, to say nothing of marching to the state capitals, they say, "would loosen all social bonds, and invite anarchy, destruction and murder." The phraseology is the same as that of Hoover and Mulrooney. But such is also the ideology, notwithstanding the fact that these fellows call themselves revolutionists, even "true revolutionists." Listen to what these "revolutionists" have to say about workers' demands. "Any true revolutionist knows that not only must the officials respect private property but all other citizens must do the same thing to a certain degree, at least." Not only that but "the true revolutionist knows that as long as capitalism lasts private property is sacred." And not only does the true revolutionist know all these things so useful for capitalism, but "he abhors anarchy."

What does all this mean in terms of political actuality? It means surrender to capitalism. What do these S. L. P. propagandists wish to achieve with their repetition of the phrase, "social revolution"? Actually, the result

of their propaganda can be only one—to help capitalism in its struggle against the working class.

The S. L. P. talks industrial unionism—but its “industrial unionism” is to be preserved in alcohol for the social revolution. In the meantime there is the situation among the miners. Wages have been cut; the workers are starving; the workers are ready to fight; there is a march of great masses in Illinois against the scab agreement of the Lewis machine. What is the attitude of the S. L. P.? It tries to persuade the workers that any struggle in the field is hopeless. “In the first place, the field was notoriously over-developed during the war period; secondly, coal as a fuel has been greatly crowded out, of late, by oil and electricity; thirdly, during this rest and ‘depression’ period, new machines have been placed in most of the ‘good’ mines—the rest will be abandoned.” There is no use fighting, says the S. L. P.

Has the S. L. P. anything to propose to the miners? It sees no relief, no possible alleviation of the miseries “unless these miners, employed and unemployed, cease fighting each other and organize industrially to take hold and operate the mines for themselves”—after the social revolution. For the time being they must starve and submit to the rule of the labor fakery and the bosses.*

The S. L. P. talks “industrial unionism.” But the Communist Party has also been organizing industrial unions. What has the S. L. P. to say about the National Miners Union, Needle Trades Workers Industrial Union, National Textile Workers Union? The S. L. P. is dissatisfied with left-wing unionism. These unions, don’t you see, are fighting for immediate improvement of the situation of

* In Jamestown, N. Y., the S. L. P. union, “United Workers of America,” refused to support the striking pressmen of the Art Metal Factory. Their excuse was, as usual, “Capitalism will die of itself.”

the workers—and that brands them as “reformist.” “The Communists took with them the entire mass of S. P. reform notions, which they have tried hard ever since to paint red with imported Russian revolutionary phrases,” says the S. L. P. The greatest “reform notion” of the Communists is that the union must fight the economic struggles of the workers which are inseparable from political struggles. The Communists say that a union which is not fighting the economic battles of the workers is not a union and cannot exist for any length of time without decaying. The Communists look upon the industrial unions as one of the major means of struggle for the overthrow of capitalism. This is highly displeasing to the S. L. P. oracles. The “left wing unions,” they say, are no good, “because they are not patterned upon the human, social organism which springs from the productive mechanism of today,” which means that they are not patterned so as to confine themselves to debating the “how” and “why” of organizing Socialist production in a Socialist society.

The S. L. P. talks “industrial unionism,” but it is against strikes. “Spasmodic, unorganized strikes are promoted,” it says, “by which the workers are led out to be defeated one battalion at a time.” The S. L. P. says the workers must refrain from economic struggles—until a time comes when they have a big union embracing all the workers of the industry. It is not possible that the S. L. P.-ites should not understand that unions grow *in action, in economic struggles*, that in order to attract masses a union must offer something to the workers—and it can offer only improvement of conditions secured through struggles. The S. L. P. “revolutionary” theory reduces itself to inaction, to submission to the capitalists; the “revolutionary” propaganda reduces itself to *advocating non-resistance*.

Being opposed to “mob action,” to “anarchy,” to “barbarous methods,” the S. L. P. is naturally opposed to the

bonus movement. Hoover, it says, could not satisfy the demands of the veterans even if he wished to. The whole movement was a farce, they say; besides, the Communists were back of the whole show. It was, in fact, a conspiracy of the Communists with the army General Staff. So it is written black on white in the *Weekly People* for September 3. "According to the B. E. F., the Communists were brought to Washington by General MacArthur for the very purpose they are always used—to serve as an excuse for the rough stuff." The Communists were brought by General MacArthur to create disturbances so that Hoover might have an excuse for using the army against unarmed unemployed ex-servicemen. This is how Hoover is being whitewashed by these "true revolutionists." It is not surprising to find the following conclusion drawn in their August 13 issue: "As far as President Hoover and the Communists are concerned it seems to be a case of scratch my back and I'll scratch yours." The Communists helped Hoover and Hoover helps the Communists. All this is declared in the name of the "social revolution."

The S. L. P. understands that some bait must be added if it wishes the workers to swallow this counter-revolutionary hook. Something must be told to the workers to make them believe in the correctness of refusing to fight. This the S. L. P.-ites try to achieve by continually stressing the "industrial power" of the workers. The S. L. P. wishes the workers to believe that *even today* they actually hold power because it is they who are capable of producing everything. In the very same sentence in which the workers are told that they cannot fight capitalism with arms in hand because the arms are in the hands of the capitalists, the S. L. P. tries to persuade the workers that they should begin to study how to manage industries after the revolution *because the industrial power is already in their hands*. "Economic power is the real power." The workers are to be misled into believing that

the seizure of power of state is the secondary thing and that their battle is already won on the industrial field.

All this proves that it is possible to try to weaken the working class and to strengthen capitalist exploitation—by means of phrases of “social revolution” and an “Industrial Socialist Republic.”

It is natural that the S. L. P. should be particularly wrought up against the Communists who are leading the revolutionary struggle of the workers today and every day, increasing the strength of the working class and undermining capitalist rule. It is, therefore, not surprising to find their most vicious bites directed against the Communists. They are not very dangerous bites—just bed-bug bites, but they must be recorded.

What is it that is particularly obnoxious to the S. L. P.-ites in the Communist Party? We have a resume in the *Weekly People* of September 17. The S. L. P. hates “its (the Communist Party’s) false pretenses, its idiotic drive for the dictatorship of the proletariat, its ballyhoo of immediate demands, its incitement to violence and bloodshed.” Discarding the “false pretenses” which mean nothing, we have here three major points: dictatorship of the proletariat, immediate demands and “incitement to violence.” In all these points the S.L.P. speechifiers appear as what they actually are—defenders of the capitalist system against the onslaught of the workers.

They are against the dictatorship of the proletariat because this is the course of the Russian Revolution and because this is a practical way for the transition from capitalism to Socialism. The S. L. P. points out no transition. To the S. L. P., Socialism comes immediately after capitalism. Right from the hell of capitalism you plunge into the paradise of Socialism which you have secured through a majority vote on the basis of the Constitution of the United States and for which you have prepared by the S.L.P.’s giving lessons to the industrial union. As against

this utopian and therefore foolish and misleading notion which the S. L. P. shares in common with the anarchists of the verbally-revolutionary brand, the Communist Party points out the road of proletarian dictatorship which is practical, realistic and has been employed with success in the Soviet Union. The dictatorship of the proletariat as a means of curbing counter-revolution, building up the foundations of Socialism and leading to a classless society is something easily comprehended by an average worker. Once a worker gets into his head the clear notion of proletarian dictatorship, he will not be lured by the hazy promise of pie in the sky, by an "industrial union" advising him to fold his arms and meekly submit to capitalist exploitation. Once a worker has got the clear notion of proletarian dictatorship he will never submit to capitalist rule and will duly understand the aid rendered capitalism by the "revolutionary" S. L. P. propaganda.

The S. L. P. is against what it calls "immediate demands." This is not surprising. Through the struggles for immediate demands it is possible to organize and steel the workers for ultimate victory. Immediate demands are a means of partially improving the conditions of the workers even under capitalism. It is most essential for capitalism that the workers should not believe in immediate demands. That will keep them in leash. This is the reason why the S. L. P. is against immediate demands.

The great revolutionists, the real revolutionists, never disdained immediate demands. Four years before the revolution of 1917 *Lenin* wrote:

"The Marxists, in contradistinction to the anarchists, recognize the struggle for reforms, i.e., for such improvement in the situation of the toilers which still leave power in the hands of the ruling class. At the same time, however, the Marxists conduct the most decisive struggle against the reformists who directly or indirectly confine the strivings and activities of the working class to reforms only."

Lenin understood more than anybody else the nature of the reforms that can be wrested from the hands of capitalism, but like a real leader of the working class he realized that the workers must fight for immediate demands.

"Understanding that while capitalism lasts reforms can be neither lasting nor earnest, the workers struggle for improvements and they utilize the improvements for a continuation of a more stubborn struggle against wage-slavery. The reformists are striving, by means of subterfuge, to divide and deceive the workers, to distract them from their class struggle. The workers who have recognized the falsity of reformism will use reforms to develop and broaden their class struggle."

In these words is given a clear distinction between reformism and the revolutionary struggle for immediate demands. Immediate demands, even partly won, make it possible for the workers to continue their struggle on a new basis with more vigor and greater determination. The struggle for the immediate demands does not weaken the working class, on the contrary, it makes it stronger—and this is why the S. L. P. is against immediate demands.

The third and last point against the Communists is "violence and bloodshed." The S. L. P. tries to make the impression that the Communist Party invites bloodshed, that it *loves* bloodshed. The S. L. P. uses the same vocabulary as the police—but it does it in the name of "sympathy" for the poor workers. The Communist Party, says the S. L. P., is leading the workers to slaughter. "Propagating physical force, riot, and armed rebellion, it has, during its brief career, led the deluded workers to slaughter, prison and hospital, caused changes in the laws of certain parts of our country detrimental to the working class, and muddled the minds of many workers so that the noble name of revolution to them has become synonymous with riot and violence." The characteristic feature

of this entire lament is the whitewashing of capitalism. Before the Communists came into the field, capitalist democracy was angel pure. It is the Communists who forced the governments of the various states to issue special laws. It is the Communists that have provoked force on the part of our noble police. It is not the capitalists who use the club and the gun and the poison gas at every occasion that have to be blamed. It is the Communists, with their "deadly" tactics. It is not Hoover that is to be blamed for the massacre of the bonus marchers; it is the bonus marchers and the Communists who made this slaughter inevitable. It is not the bosses in conjunction with the labor misleaders who are the instigators of attacks on the picket lines, it is the Communists—because they say that the workers must fight against intolerable conditions and because they are the first to be in the picket line. The Communists have "deluded" the workers into believing that they must offer resistance to capitalist terror.

It is difficult to find a better defence of capitalist terror than that presented by the S. L. P.

It is in line with this policy that the S. L. P., both in its platform and convention resolutions and in its publications, keeps discreet silence about the reign of terror in the United States. Why should it protest against clubbing, gassing, and shooting of workers when it is the Communists that cause our poor police chiefs to resort to violence? Why should they protest against deportations and wholesale raids when it is the Communists who lead the workers "into the very jaws of the capitalist slaughter house"? Why appeal to the workers to offer resistance to capitalist aggression when the mission of the S. L. P. is to appeal to the workers to *refrain* from every activity while singing the beauty of the "social revolution" that is to fall in their lap without any effort.

He who acts in the interests of capitalism against the workers cannot fail to attack the Communist Interna-

tional. The S. L. P. does not dare to come out openly against the Russian Revolution, but it makes it clear that the "Socialist leaders of Russia" "cannot possibly grasp the situation nor comprehend the necessary tactics in a country where social, political and industrial development has prepared the ground so thoroughly for the *Socialist revolution* and *Socialist reconstruction of society* as is the case with the United States." The Communist International, don't you see, does not understand America. The S. L. P. fossils understand America. The Communists sail under "false pretenses." The S. L. P. sails under the true banner of "social revolution." This is a theory very comforting to the exploiters.

There is one point in the S. L. P.-ites "criticism" of the Communist Party to which particular attention must be drawn. This is their ostensible fear of spies. Over and over the S. L. P. publications declare as a fact that the Communist Party is "infested with spies and *agents provocateurs*." There is hardly a mention of the Communist Party without the addition that it is "spy-ridden." The S. L. P. paper goes into ecstasy when it paints a horror story how stool-pigeons "are known to have written platforms and theses for the Communist Party, to have served as delegates to International conferences, and to have dictated tactics, led parades, sung the 'International' and in other ways disported themselves so as to throw the revolutionary movement in ill repute." This question of spies seems to be haunting the S. L. P. scribes.

Now there is no denying that, in a living revolutionary organization, a spy may creep in here and there. The revolutionary organization will sooner or later detect the enemy in its ranks and deal with him as he deserves. But, for certain periods, and particularly in the lower strata of the Party, spies are possible. Does that argue against the Communist Party? Does that mean that because the police may wish to have inside information about the class struggle, the workers have to abandon

the class struggle? To ask this question is to answer it. There were spies in the revolutionary movement of every country. There were spies even among the Bolsheviks before the revolution. This did not prevent them from becoming the Party of the revolution. This did not prevent the workers from becoming stronger in their class struggle until they were able to seize power.

When an individual or a group, however, persists in continually harping on the spy string, there must be a definite motive behind their action. The motive may be two-fold. Either the crier is himself an agent of the government and therefore is particularly keen about spies or he is unconsciously serving the capitalist masters and wants to frighten the workers with the bugaboo of spies. In other words: he is either a conscious or an unconscious spy. We have mentioned above that we do not care in the least whether the S. L. P.-ites are sincere or venal. Their harping on the spy question, however, reveals them clearly as agents of the exploiters.

Their propaganda has only one aim—to prevent the workers from joining the Communist Party, attending conferences, participating in parades, singing the "Internationale," and generally protesting in open action against the exploiters and their government. Here, as everywhere, the blame is put not on the exploiters, not on the reactionary government who are using spies, but on the Communists, on the revolutionary movement which is threatened by spies.

THE S. L. P. AND COMRADE FOSTER

The S. L. P. does not like Comrade William Z. Foster. Why should they? To them he is an embodiment of all they hate and fear. He is a leader of the masses. He is their leader in daily struggles. He is a Communist and helps map their struggles in a direction which must ultimately bring the destruction of the capitalist power and the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship. He is

a member of the Secretariat of the Communist Party and a member of the Executive Committee of the Communist International. He does not propose to the workers to wait patiently and with folded arms until the arrival of the Messiah of a "Social Revolution" secured by the ballot on the basis of the Constitution of the United States, but he urges them to fight every day and every hour for every piece of bread and for every ounce of power against the capitalists. And while the stone-age elements of the Socialist Labor Party are totally isolated from the masses, Comrade Foster has a great mass following and is, in this year's elections, the presidential candidate of his Party.

The S. L. P. has every reason to hate Comrade Foster. It has every reason to wish to undermine his influence among the workers. But because it cannot do it on the basis of principle and because slander is the favorite weapon of all the enemies of the working class, the fossils have resorted to slander. The only pamphlet they have issued in this year's election campaign is directed against Comrade Foster. *Renegade or Spy?* is the title of this piece of silly vituperation written by the National Secretary of the S. L. P., Arnold Peterson. The S. L. P. has undertaken no more, no less, than to show that Comrade Foster is either a renegade or a spy, or both. The pamphlet does not need refutation, but because it reveals, more clearly than anything, the nature of the S. L. P. ideology and tactics, we must give it some attention.

The ideological history of Comrade Foster is known to everybody. First, a member of the Socialist Party, then a member of the Industrial Workers of the World, with an inclination towards Anarcho-Syndicalism (which it is, in theory, difficult to distinguish from the I. W. W.), then a union leader working within the framework of the American Federation of Labor, but already forming its revolutionary left wing, then an open leader of the revolutionary left wing and a member of the Communist Par-

ty. In conformity with the line of the Communist International and the Red International of Labor Unions, Comrade Foster, as a Communist, first confined himself to working within the reactionary unions of the American Federation of Labor and the railway brotherhoods, and later led in the organization of revolutionary industrial unions.

Comrade Foster's history is an open book and it is the history of many revolutionists who were continually moving *towards the Left*. Can one blame him for having shaken the dust of the Socialist Party off his feet? Can one accuse him of inconsistency because he realized that the I. W. W. had become an impediment to the revolutionary movement?

One example may serve as an indication of the level on which the S. L. P. secretary conducts his anti-Foster propaganda. In resigning from the I.W.W., Foster wrote a letter to the *Industrial Worker*, official organ of the I. W. W., in which he repudiates the theory of that organization. He deplores the fact that the members of the organization, particularly the later-comers, repeat the I. W. W. theory without criticism. "Parrot-like and unthinking, we glibly re-echo the sentiment that 'Craft unions cannot become revolutionary unions,' and usually consider the question undebatable," wrote Foster. Mr. Peterson triumphantly gets hold of that quotation and exultantly declares: "Here we have one of the many excellent self-portrayals of the man. 'Parrot-like and unthinking' are excellent designations for that half of his life which may be regarded as having been devoted directly to the promotion of anarchism in one form or another." Because Foster protested against being "parrot-like and unthinking," the "true revolutionist" of the S. L. Party says that *he* was "parrot-like and unthinking."

It is a clumsy slander apparent even to the casual reader of the pamphlet and it is this clumsy slander that gives the booklet its particular odor.

"Always topsy-turvy, ever imitative of things foreign, definitely anti-Marxian, it (American Communism) now represented the embodiment of Fosteristic dualism, that unmistakable compound of Anarchist physical force advocacy and petty-bourgeois reform pleas." Nothing new in this tirade. "Topsy-turvy" is only a phrase; "imitation of foreign things" means adherence to the principles of the Communist International; "anti-Marxism" is opposition to what the S. L. P. considers to be Marxism and what in reality is a travesty of Marxism. As to the advocacy of physical force and reform this only reveals the inability of the S.L.P.-ites to understand that the struggle for the final goal, the dictatorship of the proletariat, does not exclude but must include the struggle for the immediate needs of the masses, if the final goal is to become a reality.

There is one chapter in Foster's biography which is particularly distasteful to the enemies of the working class, and this is Foster's leadership in the great steel strike of 1919. The strike, the only open mass struggle against the steel barons in the history of modern capitalism in the United States, was led in a militant fashion in spite of the inherent reluctance of the American Federation of Labor to sanction such class battles and in spite of the terror of the steel trust headed by Judge Gary, the strong man of American finance capital.

Against the strikers were arrayed the police, the cosacks, the courts, the newspapers, the pulpit, plus the governments of the various states and the federal government with the Congress and the Senate. There were 365,000 men on strike; together with the families of the workers the strike involved two million human beings. It was a question of higher wages, shorter hours, and better working conditions. It was a life and death struggle against one of the most powerful employers' organizations in the world.

The press issued a stream of vituperation against Comrade Foster on account of his past affiliations with the I. W. W. and Anarcho-Syndicalism. The strike, approved by the A. F. of L., was painted as a Bolshevist undertaking and Comrade Foster as the red arch-devil. The propaganda was intended to frighten the strikers, to drive a wedge between the strikers and the leadership, to weaken the strikers' morale. In the midst of this "red" baiting propaganda, the Senate of the United States set up a special committee to "investigate" the strike. The Senate Committee was intended to help the steel trust. It was meant to "expose" Foster as a dangerous "red." It was to become a clearing house for all the gossip and all the back-stairs vilification against the strikers and their leaders.

Foster was called to "testify." He was treated not like a citizen doing something within legal rights even as they are defined by capitalist law, but as a culprit, as a criminal whose guilt had to be established. The Senate Committee, officially, was supposed to supply the government with information about the situation of the workers and the possibility of satisfying their demands. But the committee was much more interested in Foster's past, because it hoped in this way to discredit the leader before the backward workers and before the working class as a whole. At the hearings, a search of hearts was instituted against Comrade Foster. The committee was not only interested in what he said or did during the strike, but in his social and political views generally. Foster demanded an executive session in order that his views might not be distorted by lying press correspondents to the detriment of the strike. The committee refused. Foster felt that nothing was left for him but to deal with the enemy accordingly. He answered in such a manner as to supply the least information to his inquisitors.

Was it good revolutionary tactics? It is true that revolutionists must not expose themselves to the enemy un-

necessarily. The Senate Committee was as much of an "impartial" investigating body as was in later years the Fish Committee. The Senate Committee was the class enemy in power. As a rule, we do not have to surrender to the class enemy on every occasion. We do not have to expose before him our innermost thoughts. We may have to camouflage to avoid his clutches. But we must never conduct ourselves in a manner that would mislead *the masses*. We must always think of the influence our statements will have on the revolutionary labor movement.

Foster drove his camouflage too far. Asked whether he still believed in the propositions contained in a pamphlet of his, advocating anarcho-syndicalism (written in 1911), he said: "Well, I could not say that. Some of that I would still believe. Some of it I would not." Asked whether he still maintained the same views on unionism as were contained in his old pamphlet, he answered: "I am one who changes his mind once in a while. I might say that other people do, too." There was irony in this and there was a way of evading a pitfall. Moreover, in the same reply Foster declares bitterly: "I would like to say this: It isn't that I care, but I know that no matter what I say it will be misconstrued. It is bound to be misconstrued." These words indicate under what terrific strain he found himself at the hearings.

Senator Walsh stated the situation quite clearly and openly, when he said, "Now, if you have changed your views, if you are a loyal American and you do not believe in these isms, I think the quicker you can get that before us, the quicker you can show us that you are a loyal American, the better it will be and the more it will help, not yourself, but the workmen who may be injured by your radicalism."

There was an open threat here. If you are a radical, said the Committee, that may injure the workers. Foster made the mistake of trying to sacrifice himself, his own

revolutionary reputation, in order to spare the strikers more harm. He went as far as to admit that he had bought liberty bonds during the war. Asked about his part in the war, he was at the beginning very vague. He said, "I did the same as everyone else." He said he wanted the war to be won at all costs. Pressed for further information, he said that he had bought bonds, "either \$450 or \$500 worth of bonds during the war. I cannot say exactly." He went further to say that his views did not differ from the views of Samuel Gompers. He knew and everybody knew that he was a rebel, but he tried by this maneuver to divert the Senate's attack from the strikers. He played lame. He pretended to have no particular opinions. He said, "I have no teachings or principles."

Was Comrade Foster's line correct?

The Central Committee of the Communist Party, in its statement of August 16, 1932, had the following to say on this question:

"Comrade Foster made a great mistake in meeting this situation. He surrendered to the position of the Socialist Party and its leadership on this point. He denied that he was a revolutionist. He denied that he was against the war. He declared instead that he had himself purchased liberty bonds and that the Stockyard Workers Union, which he had organized and headed during that period, had carried on a campaign for the sale of liberty bonds."

The Central Committee, and Comrade Foster himself, do not deny that a "great mistake" was made. Comrade Foster, says the Central Committee statement, thought, together with the Socialist Party and the Syndicalists, "that the political struggles, such as the struggle against war, must be subordinated to the supposed 'immediate needs' of the workers." But Comrade Foster, says the statement, was a great fighter for the workers' cause even at the time when he made the mistake.

"Here we are justified in taking note of the fact that precisely during the period when he made this serious mistake, Foster was also accomplishing the only serious mass organization of workers and conducting the only serious organized mass struggle which took place. Foster organized and led 160,000 packing house workers, gaining them conditions such as they never knew before nor since. He organized 250,000 steel workers and led 350,000 in a three-months strike against the most powerful American monopoly industry. In spite of this opportunist mistake on the war situation, he succeeded in making himself the man most hated and most feared by the American capitalist class. And he gained the experience which led him directly, in the years immediately following, into the Communist Party and into the clear-cut Bolshevik struggle on all fronts of the class war, the struggle against war as well as the daily struggles of all workers on their immediate needs."

The error, says the Central Committee, was "only an error and not a principle with him."

"He recognized this error and has since then many times condemned it himself. It is precisely because Comrade Foster recognized the seriousness of this error that he is now so persistently fighting against opportunism which breeds such errors and which, if followed as a system, leads inevitably into the camp of the counter-revolutionary Socialist Party. Now the Socialist Party condemns Foster for not having elevated his error into a policy, which latter act would have made of Foster an honored member of the Socialist Party. Instead, Foster recognized his mistake, condemned it, and has since fought against all forms of social patriotism and against the social patriotic Socialist Party. That is why the Socialist Party attacks him."

And this is precisely why the Socialist Labor Party attacks him. It does not attack him on principle. It *cannot* attack him on principle, because the S. L. P. is *not* against capitalist war or against imperialism. Mr. Peterson becomes inflated with a terrific indignation over what he calls "the evasiveness, the dodging, the abject cringing and crawling before the Committee, the revolting hypocrisy and apostacy of Foster." He would like

Foster when faced by the class enemy to lay all his cards on the table and surrender. He would like a revolutionist when questioned by the detectives to say everything he knows and say it with a vengeance. Mr. Peterson even blames Comrade Foster for "his failure to answer many of the questions," as if it were the duty of a revolutionist to step gaily into the trap laid by the police. But, of course, in Mr. Peterson's eyes it is not a trap; Mr. Peterson has faith in "American institutions" of capitalism.

The Senate wanted to know about the mooted question of violence. Foster naturally dodged the question. He asserted he had not preached force and violence during the strike. Asked about the "Bolshevistic movement in Russia," Foster said, "I don't know much about it." When the Senator persisted in saying: "Then you do not believe in it?" Foster gave the evasive reply: "Not knowing about it, of course I cannot say that I do."

Mr. Peterson is vociferous in condemning this maneuver. They would have liked it if Foster *were* a reactionary and had nothing to conceal. But they cover themselves, here as elsewhere, with the "revolutionary phrase." The fact that Foster is *now* putting his revolutionary principles in practice is overlooked. The entire situation of 1919 is overlooked. Now, after fifteen years, they drag out this incident to besmirch the reputation of a fighter. By his replies before the Senate Committee, they say, "he placed himself cheek by jowl with Gary, and cheek by jowl with the 'noble' Sammy Gompers." The fact that Foster was fighting both the steel trust and the A. F. of L. leaders at the very moment when he testified before the Committee is carefully hidden in order to divert the reader's attention from revolutionary essentials.

And what was the S. L. P. doing at the time that Foster was leading the great steel strike? The following statement from the *Los Angeles Record* of September 19,

1932, tells the story of the activity of Verne L. Reynolds, the S. L. P. presidential candidate:

"Outside of his party affiliations, Reynolds is best known for his work in labor unions. During the steel strike of 1920, he was active in Maryland, Ohio and Pennsylvania in opposition to William Z. Foster and John Fitzpatrick."

What fault does the S. L. P. find with Foster? *He moved leftward.* He fought the battles of the working class. He organized the packing house workers of Chicago, and even the old wolf of the A. F. of L. had to recognize the success of his work. He conducted the great steel strike, one of the most militant mass struggles in the history of the United States. He was at the head of every mass struggle of the workers against capitalism in the last ten years. He was at the head of the workers' mass demonstration on March 6, 1930 at Union Square, for which he landed in jail, where he spent six months (the effects of this confinement show themselves in his present illness). The S. L. P. does not like revolutionists, and it does not like the Communist Party. True to its method of attacking, not the enemies of the working class, but the enemies of capitalism, it has joined the chorus of the Brouns and Cahans, maligning the Communists instead of discussing principles and tactics.

But here again a trait manifests itself which gives one food for thought. Not only do these people betray a peculiar interest in spies and agents provocateurs, but they declare now Foster to be an agent provocateur. They say on page 26-27 of their pamphlet:

"The Foster marks of the renegade and agent provocateur stood out, and stand today, so prominently that none but the blindest fools fail to see them. And yet Stalin and his fellow revolutionists continue to recognize this adventurer (now acting the part of an agent provocateur, now the part of a social patriot, and again the part of the paid provocateur) as a worthy representative of the cause which in Russia brought liberation to the oppressed masses!"

An agent provocateur is a representative of the government who pretends to be a revolutionist and holds membership in a revolutionary organization in order to betray it to the enemy, for which he gets paid. The accusation of being an agent provocateur, a paid provocateur is specific. It can have no two meanings. Those who make it must have facts to substantiate their accusation. The S. L. P. has no such facts except its lies about Foster running away from the demonstration of March 6, 1930 (a repetition of Grover Whalen's slander)—during which in reality he was representing the workers in a critical situation and which brought Comrade Foster a three years' sentence and six months actual imprisonment. The S. L. P. has not produced a single incident which could be even misconstrued as an act of betrayal. This accusation simply won't hold water. It does not in the slightest conform to facts, to reality. It does, however, reveal in a very clear light the S. L. P. group. It is not possible to think that the S. L. P. is driving its polemical zeal so far. This is no longer polemics. This is *service to the Department of Justice*. Here polemics stop. Here other arguments are required which have nothing to do with writing.

Let us, however, return to the field of polemics. This may seem unnecessary after all that has been revealed about the S. L. P. and its prophets. But we must clear up some more of this rubbish before we are through with the lot. Attached to the anti-Foster pamphlet are excerpts from the works of the Anarchist, Bakunin. They are printed to show that the Communists of today are the Anarchists of yesterday and that the S. L. P. is right in calling them Anarcho-Communists. The reproduced sentences prove just the opposite.

Bakunin says: "We need no propaganda which does not fix with definiteness the hour and the place where it will realize the purpose of the revolution." The Com-

munists do not propose to fix the hour and the place of the revolution. When the S. L. P. accuses the Communists of that it is lying.

Bakunin says: "All babblers who will not understand this will be brought to silence by force." The Communists do not silence their opponents by force. The Communists fight the capitalists and the capitalist state with all power at their disposal, but as to workers who do not understand their tactics they use persuasion, agitation and propaganda.

Bakunin says: "While we admit no other activity but destruction, we acknowledge that the form in which this activity must manifest itself may be highly manifold: poison, dagger, rope, etc." The Communists do not destroy things; they use neither poison nor dagger nor rope in their every-day activities; they do not even resort to armed demonstrations pending the final uprising in which armed conflict must decide. When the S. L. P. imputes to the Communists the use of poison, dagger and rope it deliberately lies.

Bakunin says: "We term external demonstrations only a series of actions which positively destroys something, a person, a thing, a condition that hampers the emancipation of the people." The Communists do not aim by their demonstrations to destroy either a person or a thing; what they strive at destroying is the backwardness and scatteredness of the workers and to win the demands raised by the demonstration. The S. L. P. knows this but after what we have seen of it we are no more surprised at its malicious lies.

The S. L. P. quotes a report of a commission of the First International on Anarchism which says: "In the place of the economic and political struggle for the emancipation of the workers they substitute the all-destroying deeds of the rabble of the jails (slum elements) as the highest personification of the revolution. In short, one

must release that riff-raff kept in check by the workers themselves . . . , and thus of their own impulse place at the disposal of the reactionaries a well-disciplined gang of agents-provocateurs." The S. L. P. wishes to make believe that this is a fitting portrait of the Communists. "Riff-raff kept in check by the workers themselves," "jail birds," "slum elements. . . ." The bed-bugs remain true to themselves.

The S. L. P.-ites live on the memory of Daniel De Leon. They even wish to prove that Lenin was influenced by De Leon. In 1932, fifteen years after the revolution, when there exists a whole library dealing with Lenin, the S. L. P.-ites quote a bourgeois correspondent wiring to the *World*, January 31, 1918, that "Lenin, closing his speech" in the Soviet Congress, "showed the influence of De Leon." If they can drag Marx and Engels to the level of pacifists and non-resisters, why not make Lenin a pupil of De Leon!

This only shows the "freedom" of these gentlemen regarding revolutionary theory and revolutionary history. They, by their very existence, are a blot on real Socialism. a mockery of every real revolutionary principle. At the same time they use the name of Lenin, whose teachings they defy, to "boost" their god, De Leon.

The truth is that, while De Leon deserves recognition for his adamant hatred of capitalism, for his struggle against the union bureaucracy, for his advocacy of industrial unionism, for his insistence on party discipline and for his denunciation of reformism, he was the opposite of Lenin not only as regards mass movement, closeness to the masses, understanding of the role of the Party as a vanguard of broad masses, but also as regards the theory of revolution, the view on the seizure of power.

De Leon was against the struggle for immediate demands. He said:

"Give us a truce with your 'reforms'! There is a sickening air of moral mediocrity in all such petty movements of petty, childish aspirations at times like these, when gigantic mass issues are thundering at every man's door for admission and solution." *

De Leon was the father of that *sectarianism* which made the S. L. P. a museum specimen.

De Leon conceived the task of his party as an endeavor "to push society onward *by popular enlightenment*." He spoke of "revolution" and "social revolution," but he had in mind the "civilized method" of a "peaceful trial of strength" with the capitalist system. He asserted the right of the people to *defend* the revolution after it has been achieved *by peaceful means*. He defined the task of his party, which he called "the progressive revolutionary element," as "the preaching of the social revolution upon the *civilized field* of political action," meaning the ballot. He called his adherents to "crystallize the proletarian *vote* for the social revolution."

De Leon had a profound hatred of revolutionary mass movements, of "disturbances," of mass revolts under capitalism. He calls them "anarchist outbreaks," "disastrous outbreaks of blind fury." He wanted the workers to be peaceful and wait until they were strong enough to "step in" and "take over" everything—which they cannot become if they do not fight. He wanted a canned industrial organization of the proletariat "that will enable it to assume the reins of industrial government on the day of its political victory"—at the polls.

De Leon is, fundamentally, opposed to Leninism, although Lenin may have valued the *idea* of an industrial union, as reported by the late John Reed. And certainly the S. L. P. as it was created on the basis of De Leonism

* These and subsequent quotations from De Leon are taken from *Revolutionary Milestones*, an S. L. P. pamphlet, and from *The Socialist Labor Party*, a history of the S. L. P.

is a travesty upon revolutionary Socialism and a travesty upon Marxism- Leninism. In fact, it has so much in common with the Socialist Party of Hillquit-Thomas in its respect for "American institutions," in its extolling bourgeois democracy, in its belief in the ballot as a road to freedom, in its hatred for revolutionary methods of struggle, that the two parties are often hardly distinguishable from one another.

* * *

The S. L. P. is best proof that one can do the most destructive work among the workers under the slogan of "Capitalism must be destroyed." The S. L. P., small and insignificant as it is, has devised a method of doing this kind of work with perfection. Here are two out of many examples. A "citizens' " committee of business men was organized in Seattle to fight Communism and "Red activities" in the vicinity. Who is to be blamed? The S. L. P. blames this bit of reaction on the Communists. It is they that have provoked such reaction by their "game," says the S. L. P. . . . Hoover and his henchmen have declared that the war veterans were Communists. Who is to be blamed? Again the S.L.P. blames this on the Communists. It is they that, by their very existence, gave Hoover the occasion to hide behind a pretext, says the S.L.P. . . . The Communists, says the *Weekly People*, "play the game perfectly for the American reaction." The reaction is blamed not on the capitalists and their government agents but on the Communists. If the Communists were to refrain from struggle there would be no reaction and everything would be sweet and "democratic." The fighters against capitalism are guilty. The best way is to do nothing and to wait "for the ultimate lockout of the capitalist class."

These gentlemen solicit votes at the elections. It is time the workers drove them out altogether from their ranks.

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